

Tips for the paediatric environment

Many students feel nervous about seeing paediatric patients and worry about causing unnecessary distress to children.

Strategies for interacting with children and their families include:

- Observe your team – how do they interact with children of different ages? Do they change how they approach the child or examine them? Adopt some of their strategies and ask for feedback.
- Address the child – Show respect to children by addressing them in the consultation and asking and respecting their preferences.
- Get permission – always ask permission from the parent when examining children and have them present in the room with you. Explain what you are doing as you go.
- Choose your timing – Do not examine children during their rest or meal times. Ask their parent which times generally work best. This is both respectful to the child and their family and will likely help you have the best experience with the child possible.
- Get supervision – ask to be supervised if you are worried about causing distress of any kind. This includes if you will ask any personal questions from adolescents, are given the opportunity to assist with a procedure or there is a sensitive aspect to your examination.
- Get help – If you are worried that a child you have seen is becoming unstable or more unwell let someone know straight away.